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Viewing cable 07BERN258, IRAN: SWISS POLDIR AMBUEHL TELLS EUR A/S FRIED HE \

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07BERN258**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07BERN258	2007-03-16 07:49	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Bern

Appears in these articles:

http://www.letemps.ch/swiss_papers

VZCZCXRO7217
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK
DE RUEHSD #0258/01 0750749
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 160749Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY BERN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3815
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE

2007-03-16 07:49:00 07BERN258 Embassy Bern CONFIDENTIAL VZCZCXRO7217\
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK\
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/15/2017 \
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [UNSC](#) [SZ](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN: SWISS POLDIR AMBUEHL TELLS EUR A/S FRIED HE \

IS GOING TO TEHRAN \

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classified By: Ambassador Peter Coneway, Reasons 1.4 b/d \

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Summary \

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1.(C/NF) Swiss State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Michael Ambuehl told visiting EUR A/S Fried and Ambassador Coneway on March 9 that he planned to visit Tehran the week of March 12, claiming that IAEA DG ElBaradei had encouraged Ambuehl to tell Iranian Nuclear Negotiator Ali Larijani that Iran was facing its "last chance." A/S Fried and the Ambassador cautioned strongly against the visit, noting that a Swiss visit could be misinterpreted and used by Iranian officials, particularly given Bern's status as U.S. protecting power in Tehran. Ambuehl assured the USG that his message would be identical to that of the UN Security Council and IAEA, namely that Iran must suspend all enrichment activities and accept its international obligations. Ambuehl's staff informed Embassy on March 12 that he was on his way to Tehran and would provide a readout immediately upon return. End \ summary. \

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"Last Chance" Message for Iran \

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2.(C/NF) Swiss State Secretary Michael Ambuehl met with A/S Dan Fried and the Ambassador on March 9 at Zurich Airport, joined by Swiss DFA Americas Desk official Urs Hammer and Poloff. Ambuehl told A/S Fried that he planned to fly to Tehran the week of March 12 to meet with Iranian Nuclear Negotiator Ali Larijani. Ambuehl said that he wanted to brief A/S Fried and the Ambassador in order to keep the USG fully apprised of Swiss activities, per Ambassador Coneway's request. His purpose, he said, would be to push Iran to accept the three "modalities" demanded by the UN Security Council and IAEA, namely: \

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-- Suspension of all enrichment activities, with "no tricks;" \
-- Transparency with the international community; and \
-- Acceptance of rights and obligations as defined by the IAEA and UNSC resolutions. \

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3.(C/NF) Ambuehl said he had been encouraged to travel to Iran by IAEA DG ElBaradei, with whom he had spoken three times in recent days. ElBaradei told Ambuehl that he had spoken with Secretary Rice and suggested that "we have to use the Swiss" to urge the Iranians to abide by UNSC resolutions. Notably, ElBaradei had not conveyed what the Secretary's response (if any) was. In any event, Ambuehl would tell the Iranians that this was their "last chance." He acknowledged that a Swiss effort would have only a 30 percent chance of success, but described the visit as low-risk, high potential gain. \

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Counterargument \

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4.(C/NF) Ambassador Coneway challenged Ambuehl to describe what if anything new the Swiss could tell the Iranians. It was a delicate time in the stand-off between the P5 plus 1 and Iran; silence would be the best policy by Switzerland. Moreover, Tehran would be unlikely to see this as a "last chance." A/S Fried told Ambuehl firmly that the USG had been concerned by some Swiss actions. Side initiatives could encourage the Iranians to game the unity of the international community. Bern's status as U.S. Protecting Power could also cause Iran to misconstrue Swiss actions. \

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5.(C/NF) Ambuehl insisted that his prospective visit would not undermine the P5 plus 1. His points would be exactly the points agreed to by the UN Security Council and supported by the IAEA. Iran's rebuff of the Swiss initiative would be recognized as further evidence of Tehran's intransigence. \

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6.(C/NF) A/S Fried reiterated that the international \
community had finally gained traction against Iran. It was \
important to let the pressure work. A/S Fried urged Ambuehl \
to make no firm plans until we could speak to officials in \
Washington. In any event, Ambuehl should make clear to the \
Iranians, if he does in the end go, that he did not speak for \
the USG. Ambuehl said that this went without saying. \
Ambuehl asked for understanding of the difficult situation he \
was in (we surmise this means the directive from Foreign \
Minister Calmy-Rey to engage with Iran on this issue). \
Options other than a flat "no" would be appreciated. A/S \
Fried and Ambassador Coneway agreed to get back to him as \
soon as possible. \
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Ambassador Coneway's follow up call to Ambuehl \
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7.(C/NF) Using points provided by P staff, Ambassador Coneway \
called Ambuehl that night with the message that the USG had \
made its opinion clear. There was nothing new in the Swiss \
proposal and the visit presented many opportunities for \
misinterpretation. The decision to go would be a sovereign \
Swiss decision to take. If Ambuehl chose to go, the \
Ambassador stressed, it must be clear that he was not acting \
on the USG's behalf. \
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8.(C/NF) Ambuehl's initial response was that he would \
consider the USG points. However, his diplomatic advisor \
Stephan Estermann called DCM on March 12 to announce that \
Ambuehl was on his way to Tehran and would provide a briefing \
upon his return. \
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Comment \
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9.(C/NF) A/S Fried and Ambassador Coneway were very clear in \
their expression of concern about Ambuehl's planned travel to \
Tehran. However, it is obvious that the Swiss think there is \
at least the chance that the engagement of a "disinterested" \
non-member of the P5 plus 1 could offer Tehran a face-saving \
way to give into the UN Security Council - a belief \
apparently reinforced by ElBaradei. Ambuehl was noticeably \
uncomfortable not taking the USG's advice. But, there is \
little surprise in his decision to go forward with the visit, \
given the clear mandate he has received from Swiss Foreign \
Minister Calmy-Rey. \
CONEWAY \
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